

Stone Holster For Temperature Maintenance

Cross Reference to Related Application

This application claims benefit of priority of provisional application Serial No.

- 5 60/442,899 Provisional application titled "Stone Holster" filed on June 28, 2003 whose inventor was Ricardo Saikali.

Field of the Invention

The present invention relates, generally, to an article of equipment to be worn by a massage therapist or the like around their waist, outside of the remainder of their apparel. By means of the holster of the present invention, a user is able to store at least one receptacle containing a liquid, and at least one heated object, such as a stone, each of which can be used in massage therapy. The heated stone or object may be placed in a removable storage lining portion within a thermally insulated portion of the holster, thereby maintaining the temperature of the stone or object for an extended period. Alternatively, the stone or object can be placed in a removable storage lining portion within a non-insulated portion separate from the thermally insulated portion allowing the stone or object to cool to a suitable temperature prior to use.

Background of the Invention

The use of liquids or fluids, such as oils, lotions, gels, and creams, in massage therapy treatment is well known.

In recent years, there has been an increase in the popularity and use of heated stones, a relatively new massage modality, as part of a relaxation or deep tissue focussed treatment. Prior to their use, the stone or stones must be heated to a temperature suitable for treatment. Once this temperature has been reached, it is desirable to have means to

maintain this temperature for a time, a means to allow for the transportation of the stone or stones and a means to store the stone or stones until the eventual use during treatment.

In the past, it was required that the stone or stones be heated to the desired temperature, and once removed from the heat source, applied in treatment before the

5 stone or stones had begun to cool from the optimal temperature for the required treatment.

Dependant upon the heat source used, the stone or stones may be too hot to place directly on the skin and therefore were set aside on a counter or other location to allow for a cooling period. The location may not always be convenient. During a massage treatment session, the therapist will be moving around the client and may not always be able to reach

10 the counter or other location and would be required to step away from the patient to retrieve the stone or stones. Additionally, the therapist would have difficulty monitoring the temperature and may miss the opportunity to utilize the stone or stones at the optimal temperature, thereby requiring the heating process to be repeated.

Without a pouch suitable of holding the required number of stones, the therapist may only be able to transport several stones at a time, necessitating numerous trips to the heat source or to the counter or to the any other storage location. These additional trips introduce time away from the treatment and patient, and reduce the effectiveness of treatment.

Additionally, due to Codes of Ethics and Standards of Practice as well as Universal Precautions In Health Care Settings (ie. College of Massage Therapists of Ontario, Canada; June 1999 Standard 1, page 23), all equipment used by a therapist should be cleaned and/or disinfected according to the requirements of communicable disease control. In order to be in accord with this and like standards, removable linings for the storage areas of the holster are included.

25 General utility pouches, such as those found in United States Patents Nos. 2,922,165 (Krawczyk) and 2,263,538 (Freirich) allow for the storage and transportation of stones and receptacles containing liquids, but fail to provide any insulation means to allow

for the maintenance of temperature of the stones. They also fail to allow for removable linings for cleaning and/or disinfecting.

Containers intended to allow for the storage and transportation of articles while thermally isolating said articles, such as those found in United States Patents No. 4,119,248 (Butler et al.) and Canadian Patent No. 2,038,000 (Kouwenberg), do provide temperature maintenance, but fail to provide a means to allow temperature to reduce until a desired temperature is achieved and the article is deployed. They also fail to allow for removable linings for cleaning and/or disinfecting.

10 **Summary of the Invention**

The present invention relates to a holster, to be worn around the waist of a user, and capable of containing at least one heated object, such as a stone, the holster comprising at least one thermally insulated portion, at least one thermally open portion, and a securing means to secure the holster around the waist of the user.

15 According to a preferred embodiment of the present invention, the at least one thermally insulated portion and the at least one thermally open portion are removable and are fashioned from materials that are suitable for repeated washing and/or disinfecting without deteriorating.

According to another preferred embodiment of the present invention, an additional 20 area is provided in the holster to facilitate the storage of a receptacle containing a liquid to be administered during a massage therapy session.

Advantageously, the holster is fashioned from material suitable for articles of clothing such as leather, cloth, polyester, and canvas. This material may be utilized in a variety of thicknesses and colours. The thermally insulated portion is preferably fashioned 25 from polyester pocketed insulation material or reflective thermal material.

The securing means may comprise a belt having two ends, a buckle disposed at one end of the belt designed to interface with holes situated within the other end of the belt,

so as to secure the belt around the waist of a user. Alternatively, the securing means may comprise a belt having two ends, one end of the belt comprising a plastic clip designed to interface with another plastic receptor situated at the other end of the belt. Naturally, the securing means may further comprise adjustment means that facilitates the adjustment of
5 the length of the belt of the securing means.

The thermally insulated portion advantageously includes a closing means, whereby the area can be entirely surrounded by insulating materials and closed, whereby to assist in retaining the heat of the stone for an extended period of time.

A method of temperature maintenance of heated stones used in massage therapy
10 or the like is also provided, wherein a user decides that the heated stones initially require cooling, the stones are placed in a non-thermally insulated portion until such time as a desired temperature has been reached, the heated stones are transferred into a thermally insulated portion and then isolated therein using a thermally insulated closure, thereby maintaining the temperature of the heated stones.

Brief Description of the Drawings

Figure 1 is a front view of the a first embodiment of a holster according to the present invention;

5 Figure 2 is a front view of the a second embodiment of a holster according to the present invention; and

Figure 3 is a front transparent view of the a removable portion of the holster according to the present invention.

10 Detailed Description of the Invention

The stone holster shown in Figure 1 comprises a main holster back portion 8, a thermally insulated portion 6, a thermally insulated closure 7 for the thermally insulated portion, a non-thermally insulated portion 5, and a receptacle storage area 4. Extending laterally from each side of the back portion 8 are a first belt portion 3 and a second belt portion 9.

A belt length adjustment means 2 is disposed in belt portion 3 and first and second belt buckle elements 1 and 10 are located at the ends of the belt portions 3 and 9, respectively. The first belt portion 3 and the second belt portion 9 are secured to the main holster back portion 8. The length of the first belt portion 3 is adjusted via a belt length adjustment means 2. The first belt portion 3 and the second belt portion 9 are positioned around the waist of an intended user and are secured by inserting a first belt buckle element 1 into a second belt buckle element 10.

The main holster back portion 8 is positioned to be worn in a frontal position by the intended user. In doing so, the user will have access to the thermally insulated portion 6, the non-thermally insulated portion 5, and the receptacle storage area 4. Each of the thermally insulated portion 6, the non-thermally insulated portion 5, and the receptacle

storage area 4 are open to the top to allow for items to be placed downward into these portions.

One or more heated stones may be inserted into the thermally insulated portion 6 and then isolated therein using the thermally insulated closure 7, thereby maintaining the temperature of the heated stones. If a user decides that the heated stones initially require cooling, the stones may be placed in the non-thermally insulated portion 5 until such time as the desired temperature has been reached. The heated stones may then be transferred into the thermally insulated portion 6 and then isolated therein using the thermally insulated closure 7, thereby maintaining the temperature of the heated stones.

A receptacle storage area 4 is provided to allow for the transportation of and ease of access to a receptacle containing a fluid required during the administration of massage therapy or the like. This fluid may be an oil, lotion, gel, or cream.

A second embodiment of the present invention as shown in Figure 2 comprises a main holster back portion 8, a receptacle storage area 4, a removable storage lining portion 5a, a removable storage lining portion 6a, a first portion of a securing device 11 positioned near and around the outside upper edge of portions 5a and 6a, a thermally open pocket area 5, a thermally insulated pocket area 6, a second portion of a securing device 11a positioned near and around the upper edge of pockets areas 5 and 6. The removable portions 5a and 6a slide into portions 5 and 6 respectively from the top, and are then secured in place by joining the two portions of the securing device 11 and 11A, after which the thermally insulated closure 7 may be used. Extending laterally from each side of the back portion 8 are a first belt portion 3 and a second belt portion 9. A logo area 12 may optionally be positioned on the front of the second pocket area 6.

A belt length adjustment means 2 is disposed in belt portion 3 and first and second belt buckle elements 1 and 10 are located at the ends of the belt portions 3 and 9, respectively. The first belt portion 3 and the second belt portion 9 are secured to the main holster back portion 8. The length of the first belt portion 3 is adjusted via a belt length

adjustment means 2. The first belt portion 3 and the second belt portion 9 are positioned around the waist of an intended user and are secured by inserting a first belt buckle element 1 into a second belt buckle element 10.

The main holster back portion 8 is positioned to be worn in a frontal position by the
5 intended user. In doing so, the user will have access to the first pocket portion 5, the second pocket portion 6, and the receptacle storage area 4. Each of the first pocket portion 5, the second pocket portion 13, and the receptacle storage area 4 are open to the top and allow for items to be placed downward into these portions.

Container portions 5a and 6a are removable in order to allow replacement, once
10 soiled or worn out, with cleansed/disinfected new portions 5a and 6a to be used for each new client. This allows the device to meet up with the legal regulations and ethics standards of cleanliness in the field of massage therapy.

Referring to Figure 3, a removable storage lining portion 5a and a removable storage lining portion 6a comprises a first portion of a securing device 11 positioned near and around the outside upper edge of portions 5a and 6a and may contain one or more heated objects 13, such as stones.
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